

A Study of the Ascetic Precepts in the *Da amituo jing**

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Abstract

This paper addresses the formation of the precepts in the *Da amituo jing*. This issue will be approached in the following ways : Firstly, I discussed the precepts in the Dharmākara story as found in the *Da amituo jing*. Secondly, I discussed the precepts in the 7th vow and its fulfillment, the higher grade of aspirants. Thirdly, I discussed the precepts in the 6th vow and its fulfillment, the middle grade of aspirants. Finally, I discussed the precepts in the 5th vow and its fulfillment, the lower grade of the aspirants.

Key-words : ascetic precepts, three grades system of rebirth, cultivation of the bodhisattva path, cultivation of good merit, the *Da amituo jing*.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the formation of the ascetic precepts in the earliest version of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, the *Da amituo jing* 大阿彌陀經 (T.12, No.362, hereafter the *Da amituo jing*, or *siglum* : 大阿). One of the typical characteristics found in the *Da amituo jing* is that the ascetic precepts, as one of the important elements of the Six Perfections, are highlighted and abounding in the *Da amituo jing*, but have unexpectedly disappeared in the later versions.⁽¹⁾ For example, the character *jie* 戒 (Sanskrit *śīla*) appears twenty-eight times in the *Da amituo jing*. By contrast, this character appears only eight times in the *Wuliangshou jing* 無量壽經 (T.12, No.360, or *siglum* : 無量), but five of these instances are copies from the respective passages of the *Da amituo jing*.⁽²⁾ In addition to the character *jie*, the concept of the precepts is also expressed in diverse ways, such as *daojin* 道禁 “Buddhist precepts ;” 斷愛欲 “discarding lust ;” 不當瞋怒 “abstain from behaving angrily.” Although this issue has been discussed in some previous studies, all of those research results have been undertaken based on the notion that the doctrinal characteristics of the *Da amituo jing* represent the original form of Indian Pure Land Buddhist thought.⁽³⁾ According to my recent research, nonetheless, the *Da amituo jing* is quite possibly the one which was purposely revised by the Chinese translator in order to highlight the importance of the cultivation of the bodhisattva path to perfection through the Six Perfections.⁽⁴⁾ Abiding by ascetic precepts is an important part of the Six Perfections. Accordingly, it is necessary to figure

out this issue in detail and in connection with the other features found in the *Da amituo jing*. This paper aims to make some progress towards this goal.

1. The precepts in the Dharmākara story in the *Da amituo jing*

One of the typical characteristics of the *Da amituo jing* is that this version is simply compiled based on the cultivation of good merit (作善), the bodhisattva path to perfection,⁽⁵⁾ beginning with the Dharmākara narrative and his twenty-four vows. It is noteworthy that the Dharmākara story in the *Da amituo jing* has been presented quite differently compared to other versions. The main characteristics are the following: (i) Some important vows have been purposely compiled into a short paragraph which consists of 129 words. (ii) Rather than presenting the earliest form of the twenty-four vows as suggested by SUEKI and KARIYA,⁽⁶⁾ the Dharmākara story in this version is quite possibly the one which was purposely revised by the Chinese translator of the *Da amituo jing* in order to highlight the importance of the cultivation of the bodhisattva path to perfection.⁽⁷⁾ There are two short paragraphs related to the precepts which point to the main notion of the twenty-four vows in the *Da amituo jing* and imply why it is hard to believe that the original Indian text of the *Pingdengjue jing* contained twenty-four vows akin to those of this version.⁽⁸⁾ The text which it is just before the vows of the *Da amituo jing* is as follows.

【大阿(A1)】佛語阿難：“阿彌陀佛為菩薩時，常奉行是二十四願，珍寶愛重、保持恭慎，精禪從之，與眾超絕，卓然有異，皆無有能及者”。佛言：“何為二十四願？”⁽⁹⁾ (T.12, p.301 a20-24)

The short passage above only appears in the *Da amituo jing* and the *Pingdengjue jing*. Undoubtedly, the one in the *Pingdenjue jing* is just a copy from the one in the *Da amituo jing*.⁽¹⁰⁾ It is of interest that the following passages in each version contain the twenty-four vows of Amitābha (in the *Pingdenjue jing*, he is named as *Wuliang ginging* 無量清淨 Measureless Purity Buddha), but the two versions of the twenty-four vows differ considerably from each other in their order and contents. That is to say, the one Buddha seems as if he presented us with two versions of his twenty-four vows (the same Buddha preached two different things). Although it is commonly believed that the form of the vows in the Larger *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha sūtra* evolved from that of the first twenty four vows in the *Da amituo jing*, into the second twenty-four vows in the *Pingdengjue jing*, and then into the forty-eight vows system in the Later Recension of the Larger *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha sūtra*, no scholars can present a good explanation about how the first twenty-four vows in the *Da amituo jing* evolved into those of the *Pingdengjue jing*. Moreover, according to my recent research,⁽¹¹⁾ it is unlikely that this hypothesis is correct. In fact, there is no evidence supporting this notion, just like the case of “a mistake repeated more than once is a decision” (by Paulo Coelho). In fact, the following short passage, following the texts of the twenty-four vows in

each version, helps us understand that it is hard to believe that the original Indian text of the *Pingdengjue jing* also merely contained twenty-four vows.

【大阿 (A2)】佛告阿難：阿彌陀為菩薩時，常奉行是二十四願：分檀布施、不犯道禁、忍辱、精進、一心、智慧；志願常勇猛、不毀經法、求索不懈，每獨棄國捐王，絕去財色，精明⁽¹²⁾求願無所適莫⁽¹³⁾、積功累德無央數劫，今自致作佛，悉皆得之，不亡其功也。⁽¹⁴⁾ (T.12, p.302b 15-20).

The passage above points to the main theory that the twenty-four vows should be in accordance with the cultivation of the bodhisattva path to perfection, *zuo pusadao* 作菩薩道, something deliberately highlighted in the *Da amituo jing*.⁽¹⁵⁾ The counterpart of the passage above in the *Pingdengjue jing* is simply a copy from that in the *Da amituo jing* except for some minor changes, such as the Buddha's name which is revised to *Wuliang qingjing*.

【清淨 (P2)】佛告阿難：無量清淨佛為菩薩時，常奉行是二十四願。分檀布施、不犯道禁、忍辱、精進、一心、智慧；志願常勇猛、不毀經法、求索不懈。每獨棄國捐王，絕去財色，精明求願無所適莫、積功累德無央數劫，自致作佛悉皆得之，不忘其功也。(T12, p.281 b22-27).

We can understand the following two important facts based on the paragraphs above as contained in the two versions.

(1) The main concept outlined by the twenty-four vows in the *Da amituo jing* is no other than the importance of adhering to the cultivation of the bodhisattva path to perfection, the Six Perfections. This theory is in agreement with my conclusion in recent publications.⁽¹⁶⁾

(2) Although the paragraph P2 shares the same contents with A2, the special terms, underlined phrases or their synonyms⁽¹⁷⁾ in P2 almost do not appear in the twenty-four vows in the *Pingdenjue jing*, but are only found in the twenty-four vows in the *Da amituo jing*.

Accordingly, we can recognize that: (i) the first twenty-four vows in the *Da amituo jing* were compiled based on the cultivation of the bodhisattva path to perfection, which begins to be highlighted in the Dharmākara story of the same version; and: (ii) it is hard to believe that the original Indian text of the *Pingdengjue jing* also contained twenty-four vows, but rather contained a forty-eight vows system akin to that in the extant Sanskrit version. For a preliminary discussion on the twenty-four in the *Pingdengjue jing*, see XIAO 2010.

The next question is whether those characteristics, such as the precepts, highlighted in the twenty-four vows of the *Da amituo jing*, are derived from its original Indian text or other sources.

2. The precepts in the higher grade of aspirants

As mentioned above, the character *jie* appears twenty-nine times in the *Da amituo jing*, but it appears only four times in the first half of the sūtra, while the remaining twenty-five times are all found in the second half of this version. In fact, those four references are all found in the vows contained in the *Da amituo jing*, the most important three vows addressing the three grades of aspirants seeking rebirth in the Pure Land. The 7th vow regards the higher grade of aspirants, the 6th vow regards the middle grade, and the 5th vow regards the lower grade. Concerning the formation of these three vows, I presented a preliminary discussion through those special terms found in the *Da amituo jing*.⁽¹⁸⁾ The following discussion will focus on the precepts found in these three vows and their fulfillment, so that we can understand their formation and their respective fulfillment, the three grades of aspirants who seek rebirth in the land of Amitābha.

The 7th vow in the *Da amituo jing* corresponds with the 18th vow in the *Pingdengjue jing* and the Sanskrit version as well as the 19th vow in the *Wuliangshou jing*.⁽¹⁹⁾ This vow is the longest one of the vows of Amitābha in all versions of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha sūtra*. The 7th vow is as follows.

【大阿】第七願：使某作佛時，(1) 令八方、上下無央數佛國，諸天人民，若善男子、善女人有作菩薩道奉行六波羅蜜經；⁽²⁰⁾ (2) 若作沙門，不毀經戒，斷愛欲，齋戒清淨，一心念欲生我國，晝夜不斷絕，若其人壽欲終時，我即與諸菩薩、阿羅漢，共飛行迎之，即來生我國；則作阿惟越致菩薩，⁽²¹⁾智慧勇猛。得是願乃作佛，不得是願終不作佛。⁽²²⁾

(T.12, p.301 b27-c 05, 119 characters).

The 7th vow consists of two parts. The first part concerns good men or good women who cultivate the bodhisattva path to perfection for the sake of rebirth in the land of Amitābha. The second part concerns Buddhist monks who aspire for rebirth in the land of Amitābha and should strictly adhere to ascetic precepts.

Although the phrases 作菩薩道、奉行六波羅蜜經 following the first subject are the general statement regarding the cultivation of the bodhisattva path to perfection,⁽²³⁾ the Six Perfections themselves include abiding by the Buddhist precepts. It is noteworthy that the term *zuosan* 作善 “cultivate good merit” is a special term that appears over forty times in the *Da amituo jing*,⁽²⁴⁾ some of them found in the paragraphs on the Five Evils, which were compiled by the Chinese translator of the *Da amituo jing*.⁽²⁵⁾ That is to say, the first part can be abbreviated as 善男子、善女人作菩薩道. The second part is simply comprised of those phrases related to the precepts, 作沙門，不毀經戒，斷愛欲，齋戒清淨.

The fulfillment of the 7th vow addresses the higher grade of aspirants and consists of three parts.⁽²⁶⁾ The first part is just a foreword indicating that the aspirants for rebirth in the land of Amitābha can be

classified into three grades.⁽²⁷⁾ The second part is the main body addressing those aspirants who seek rebirth by strictly adhering to the ascetic precepts in all their details. The third part repeatedly highlights the importance of adhering to ascetic precepts for rebirth in the land of Amitābha.⁽²⁸⁾ In fact, the second part is simply comprised of those special terms, or phrases which are related to the precepts, such as 當去家捨妻子、斷愛欲、行作沙門、就無為之道；當作菩薩道，奉行六波羅蜜經。作沙門不虧經戒、不當瞋怒、不當與女人交通、齋戒清淨、心無所貪慕。

The term *zaijie* 齋戒 “ascetic precepts” is a special term in the *Da amituo jing*, which also plays an important role in the history of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism.⁽²⁹⁾ It is noteworthy that: (i) I do not agree with the notion that this term indicates the eight precepts for lay Buddhists, because *zaijie* appears in the 7th vow and its fulfillment (the higher grade of aspirants), and both cases mainly concern monks, although lay buddhists are also included; and: (ii) although *zaijie* is similar in meaning to discarding lust and sexual desire, which is equivalent with the Sanskrit *brahmacarya*, it is hard to believe that this term is derived from the Sanskrit *brahmacarya* as found in the original Indian text of the *Da amituo jing*, but rather is created based on the translator’s own views. The intention of the translator is none other than highlighting the importance of discarding lust for the attainment of rebirth in the land of Amitābha.

In sum, the 7th vow of the *Da amituo jing* is deliberately compiled by the Chinese translator in order to highlight the importance of the ascetic precepts for the aspirants who desire rebirth in the land of Amitābha. The paragraph about the fulfillment of this vow was compiled based on the 7th vow. In addition to the ascetic precepts, abstinence from the three poisons, greed and anger, are also deliberately listed in it.

3. The Precepts in the middle grade of aspirants

The 6th vow of the *Da amituo jing* has caused extensive concerns. According to HIRAKAWA, this vow represents one of the typical characteristics of early Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism,⁽³⁰⁾ a suggestion commonly believed in this field. It is tempting to agree that what HIRAKAWA suggested is true. After all, (i) “stupa veneration” is one of the typical features of early Mahāyāna; (ii) the words about “stupa veneration” in the 6th vow are also identified in the passages about the middle grade of aspirants in the *Da amituo jing*, the *Pingdengjue jing*, and even in the *Wuliangshou jing*.⁽³¹⁾ HIRAKAWA did not realize, nonetheless, that the *Da amituo jing* is quite possibly a version largely compiled by the Chinese translator based on his views. He also overlooked the possibility that these characteristics are derived from the translator’s own understanding of Mahāyāna in that the stupa veneration is just one of the six sources of merit listed in the 6th vow of the *Da amituo jing*. That is to say, HIRAKAWA did not fully understand the 6th vow and those special terms found in the *Da amituo jing*.⁽³²⁾ The 6th vow is as follows.

【大阿(A6)】第六願：使某作佛時，令八方、上下無央數佛國，諸天人民，(I) 若善男子、善女人，欲來生我國，用我故益作善，(II-1) 若分檀布施、(II-2) 遶塔燒香、(II-3) 散花然燈、(II-4) 懸雜繒綵、(II-5) 飯食沙門、(II-6) 起塔作寺，(III) 斷愛欲、(齋戒清淨，一心念我晝夜一日不斷絕皆令) 來生我國作菩薩。得是願乃作佛，不得是願終不作佛。⁽³³⁾ (T.12, p.301 b21-26)

The 6th vow consists of three parts based on its structure. The first part can be summarized as: 善男子、善女人作善⁽³⁴⁾ “good men or good women who cultivate good merit”. The second part lists six kinds of donations, indicating that the compiler would like to highlight the importance of cultivating merit through donations for the sake of rebirth in the land of Amitābha. The last part concerns ascetic precepts.⁽³⁵⁾ Undoubtedly, this vow focuses on the cultivation of good merit. Accordingly, we have enough reasons to believe that the 6th vow is a creation by the translator of the of the *Da amituo jing*. That is to say, there is *no* equivalent in the original Indian text with the 6th vow in the Chinese translation of the *Da amituo jing*. The vow is a vivid example reflecting the translator’s own Mahāyāna thought.

The fulfillment of the 6th vow is found in the paragraphs regarding the middle grade of aspirants and consists of two parts. The first part is quite parallel with the 6th vow, beginning with 佛言：“其中輩者…to 往至阿彌陀佛國者，可得智慧勇猛”(T12, p.292a5-16). The words related to the precepts are：當持經戒無得虧失，不當瞋怒，齋戒清淨，慈心精進，斷愛欲念。欲往生阿彌陀佛國，一日一夜不斷絕者。The middle grade of aspirants concerns those who desire to be reborn in the land of Amitābha. Even though they are unable to leave their households and wives, neither discard erotic desire, nor become Buddhist priests, if only they cultivate the six kinds donations, abstain from behaving angrily, completely adhere to the ascetic precepts, act diligently and maintain a benevolent mind, discard erotic desire, and desire to be reborn in the land of Amitābha day and night, Amitābha will manifest his transformed body so that they are able to see him and his land. Obviously, the higher grade of aspirants should cultivate all of the perfections of the bodhisattva path and the middle grade of aspirants only needs to cultivate three of them 持經戒、精進、布施。It is noteworthy that in addition to the cultivation 行, especially adherence to the ascetic precepts, faith 信 is for the first time required for the middle grade of aspirants based on the words 常信受佛經語深，當作至誠中信 “steadily and sincerely believe in the fact that (all of the words in) the Buddhist sutras are holding profound meaning”. These words regarding belief carry forward in a new paragraph.

The second part of the fulfillment of the 6th vow, the middle grade of aspirants, is a long paragraph of about 90 characters, which only appears in the *Da amituo jing* and the *Pingdengjue jing*. This long paragraph presents an account for those who neither believe in the law of causality, nor (believe in) the fact of rebirth in the land Amitābha based on his original vows.⁽³⁶⁾

In sum, the 6th vow of the *Da amituo jing* is not a translation from the original Indian text, but rather

a creation by the Chinese translator based on his own Mahāyāna thoughts.

4. The precepts in the lower grade of the aspirant

The importance of the 5th vow lies in its reference to aspirants who committed evils in their previous lives. The fulfillment of this vow concerns the lower grade of aspirants, but people who committed evils are not mentioned. The 5th vow is as follows.

【大阿】第五願：使某作佛時，令八方、上下諸無央數天人民，及蝸飛蠕動之類，若前世作惡，聞我名字，欲來生我國者，即便反政自悔過，為道作善，便持經戒，願欲生我國不斷絕。壽終皆令不復泥犁、禽獸、薜荔，即生我國，在心所願。得是願乃作佛，不得是願終不作佛。⁽³⁷⁾

(T12. P.301 a14-20)

According to ŌTA's comparative table, the 5th vow above is parallel to the 19th vow in the *Pingdengjue jing* and the Sanskrit version, as well as the 20th vow of the *Wuliangshou jing*.

Although the 19th vow of the *Pingdengjue jing* also concerns those who committed evils in their previous lives and aspire to be reborn in the land of Amitābha,⁽³⁸⁾ it does not mean that this concept is derived from the original Indian text of the *Da amituo jing* or the *Pingdengjue jing*, but rather was deliberately fabricated by the translator of the *Da amituo jing*. Firstly, the character 惡 “evil” was found over 120 times in the *Da amituo jing*, while the term 作惡 “committed evils” is a special term repeatedly found in the paragraphs on the Five Evils, which were deliberately compiled by the Chinese translator of the *Da amituo jing*. Also, the terms 前世, 悔過, 經戒 are all special terms which do not have a Sanskrit parallel. Accordingly, the 5th vow still focuses on cultivation, 行 and more specifically calls aspirants to: (i) correct and confess their mistakes; (ii) cultivate good merit; (iii) adhere to the Buddhist precepts, and (iv) constantly aspire to be reborn in the land of Amitābha. It is also especially noteworthy that the notion concerning people who committed evils and aspire to be reborn in the land of Amitābha must be derived from the 5th vow of the *Da amituo jing*; this notion has influenced the *Guan-jing*⁽³⁹⁾ and the Japanese Jōdo shū and Jōdo Shinshū.

The text regarding the lower grade of aspirants includes two parts. The first part addresses those who are not able to cultivate the good merit through the means listed in the middle grade concerning those who adhere to precepts (discarding erotic desire, not being greedy and miserly, being diligent and maintaining a benevolent mind based on the sutras, avoiding anger and completely adhering to the ascetic precepts).⁽⁴⁰⁾ Those who pursue the Buddha-dharma should aspire to be reborn in the Land of Amitābha for ten days and nights. It is unlikely that the 5th vow is quite corresponding with the passage about the lower grade of the aspirants, as in the case of the 6th vow which corresponds to the middle grade, and

the 7th vow which corresponds to the higher grade. Accordingly, the 5th vow was also deliberately compiled by the translator.

In the later part of the third grade of rebirth in the *Da amituo jing*, ten virtuous acts (in fact 20 virtuous acts have been listed) are presented as a special method for attaining rebirth and have been listed in detail, being the prerequisites for attainment.⁽⁴¹⁾

The following table indicates the relationship between the 7th, 6th and 5th vows and their fulfillment in terms of precepts in the *Da amituo jing*.

Table 1

	Vows	Fulfillment
Higher Grade (the 7 th vow)	(1) 若善男子、善女人有作菩薩道奉行六波羅蜜經； (2) 若作沙門，不毀經戒，斷愛欲，齋戒清淨	(1) 當去家捨妻子、斷愛欲、行作沙門、就無為之道； (2) 當作菩薩道，奉行六波羅蜜經。作沙門不虧經戒、不當瞋怒、不當與女人交通、齋戒清淨、心無所貪慕
Middle Grade (the 6 th vow)	斷愛欲、齋戒清淨，一心念我晝夜一日	(1) 當持經戒無得虧失 (2) 不當瞋怒，齋戒清淨，慈心精進，斷愛欲念。
Lower Grade (the 5 th vow)	前世作惡，聞我名字，即便反政自悔過，為道作善，便持經戒	(1) 其三輩者……當斷愛欲無所貪慕，得經疾慈心精進，不當瞋怒，齋戒清淨。 (2) 十善

Conclusion

In the light of the discussion above, we can draw up the following conclusion.

Firstly, the three grade of aspirants in the *Da amituo jing* do not reflect the original Indian text, but were rather deliberately compiled by the translator in order to highlight the importance of precepts for the attainment of rebirth in the land of Amitābha.

Although the 7th vow and its fulfillment both focus on the precepts for Buddhist monks, they were deliberately compiled by the Chinese translator and were not part of the original Indian text.

The 6th vow concerns lay Buddhists seeking rebirth, but this vow was created by the translator. The fulfillment of this vow, the middle grade of aspirants, follows the spirit of the 6th vow.

The 5th vow concerns the people who committed evils in their previous lives and aspire to be reborn in the land of Amitābha. It is hard to believe that this notion is derived from the original Indian text of the Larger *Sukāvatīvyūha sūtra*, but rather represents the translator's own ideas. The intention of the translation was to highlight the importance of the cultivation of good merit and abstinence from committing evils.

Owing to space constraints, the precepts contained in the paragraphs on the Five Evils, and the *Guan-jing*⁽⁴²⁾ can not be considered here, even though I hope to do so in a subsequent paper.

Endonotes

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- (1) It is noteworthy that almost all of the texts containing the character *jie* 戒, apart from the vows, have been faithfully followed by the translator of the *Wuliang qingjing pingdengjue jing* 無量清淨平等覺經 (T12, No.361, hereafter the *Pingdengjue jing*, or *siglum* : 清淨), they are not derived from the original Indian texts of the *Pingdengjue jing*, but rather from the copies of the *Da amituo jing*.
 - (2) In the Sanskrit version, however, the respective Sanskrit term *śīla* appears only three times. Accordingly, the references to the precepts in the *Wuliangshou jing* and the Sanskrit version, parallel each other, which the precepts found in the later versions of the Larger *Sukhāvatīyūha sūtra* are not so important as those in the *Da amituo jing*.
 - (3) See TATSUGUCHI 2001, pp.796-800.
 - (4) Regarding the characteristics of the *Da amituo jing*, see XIAO (forthcoming a).
 - (5) The term 作善 is one of the special terms found over 40 times in the *Da amituo jing*. For a detailed discussion on *Shan* 善 and *e* 惡 in this version, see XIAO (forthcoming c).
 - (6) See SUEKI 1980, and KARIYA 2003, pp.2-3.
 - (7) See XIAO 2012a ; and 2015a.
 - (8) I was the first to suggest this point 2010, see XIAO 2010, pp.51-56.
 - (9) The Buddha said to Ānanda : “when Amitābha was a bodhisattva, he constantly pursued the fulfillment of these twenty-four vows. He revered this Dharma attributing to it the greatest importance and cherished it like a treasure. And he kept extremely admiring and cautiously paying attention towards this Dharma while diligently contemplating on it based on the teachings. He was extraordinary and outstanding so that no one was able to surpass his level of attainment. The Buddha said : “what are the twenty-four vows?”
 - (10) The counterpart in the *Pingdengjue jing* has been revised as follows : 【清淨】無量清淨佛為菩薩時，常奉行是二十四願，珍寶愛重、保持恭順，精進禪行之。與眾超絕，卓然有異，皆無有能及者。佛言：“何等為二十四願者？” (T.12, p.281 a10-13). The name of the Buddha has been revised as *Wuliang qingjing* 無量清淨 “Measureless Purity”. Regarding the origin of *Wuliang qingjing*, see XIAO 2012b.
 - (11) As I have pointed out, the original Indian text of the *Pingdengjue jing* quite possibly did not contain twenty-four vows but, rather, may have been more closely akin to the extant Sanskrit version with about forty-eight vows (see XIAO 2010, p.51-56). It is worth noting that MITANI also pointed out that we can, at least, say that an unknown Chinese version comprising of a forty-eight vow system, attributed to the Early Recension, had been translated, something suggested based on the fragments of an unknown Chinese version of this sūtra (see MITANI 2014, pp.21-22).
 - (12) 【jingming 精明】: sincere, and single-minded. An example in 白虎通雜錄 attributed to *Bangu* 班固 reads : 齋者，言己之意念專一精明也 (see *Hanyudacidian*).
 - (13) Regarding the term *dimo* 適莫 “the attitude of people or something in accordance with their emotional inclination,” see *Hanyu dacidian* 漢語大詞典 and XIAO (forthcoming a). Cf. KARASHIMA 1999, p.150, note 108.
 - (14) The Buddha said to Ānanda, “while Buddha Amitābha was a bodhisattva, he permanently pursued these twenty-four vows : cultivation of the virtue of almsgiving and making donations, abstaining from breaking the precepts, forbearance, diligence, and cultivation of meditation (in order to attain) unrivaled wisdom. He constantly pursued his aspirations being full of valour and vigour, and he neither committed anything in contrast to the sutras, nor idled while pursuing the cultivation of the Buddha-way. He constantly and independently cultivated these Dharmas so that he permanently abandoned his kingdom and renounced the throne, absolutely left behind wealth and sensuous pleasure, sincerely pursued these vows without any emotional attachment, and accumulated achievements and

- merits for countless kalpas. These cultivations (listed above) resulted in his attainment of Buddhahood and the fulfillment of all his aspirations, for his accumulated merits and virtues were not in vain.
- (15) Regarding the cultivation of the bodhisattva path to perfection in the Dharmākara story of the *Da amituo jing*, see XIAO 2015.
 - (16) Regarding the special terms related to the bodhisattva thought in the *Da amituo jing*, see XIAO 2016a, pp.63-65.
 - (17) Such as the phrases : 不犯道禁 ; 不毀經法、絕去財色.
 - (18) See XIAO 2016a. For a comprehensive study of the three grades of aspirants on the basis of a comparative study between the respective passages in the *Da amituo jing* and those in other versions, see XIAO (forthcoming d).
 - (19) Regarding the corresponding relationship between this vow and its counterpart in other versions, see ŌTA 2015, pp.54-55.
 - (20) The phrase 六波羅蜜經 does not mean an unknown early Mahāyāna sūtra as suggested by HIRAKAWA (1969, pp.120-122), but rather a general speaking of the Six Perfections (SHIZUTANI 1974, p.57).
 - (21) Cf. the 47th vow of the *Wuliangshou jing* and the 48th vow in the Sanskrit version related to 阿惟越致菩薩 (*avivartika* or *avivartya*).
 - (22) The Seventh Vow : when I attain Buddhahood, (1) if good men or good women, humans and devas in the immeasurable Buddha-lands of the eight quarters, as well as above and below, who cultivate the bodhisattva path to perfection by pursuing the Six Perfections ; or (2) Buddhists priests who strictly adhere to the Buddhist precepts-discarding sexual desire and strictly adhering to ascetic precepts-wholeheartedly aspire to be reborn in my land, constantly, day and night, when they approach the moment of their death, if I do not let them see me surrounded by a multitude of bodhisattvas and arhats, and they are not reborn in my land, and do not instantly reach the stage of Non-retrogression and unsurpassed wisdom, may I not attain Buddhahood.
 - (23) Undoubtedly, the Six Perfections include abiding by the Buddhist precepts. Moreover, the terms 善男子、善女人, 作菩薩道 are all connected to the term *zuoshan* 作善, a special term found over 40 times in the *Da amituo jing*. According to my research, the *Da amituo jing* is the version deliberately compiled by the Chinese translator based on the concepts of *shan* 善 and *e* 惡 (see XIAO forthcoming c).
 - (24) Regarding the formation of the paragraphs on the Five Evils, see XIAO 2012b.
 - (25) Accordingly, the texts which contain, or relate to the term *zuosan* are quite probably purposely created by the translator of the *Da amituo jing*. For a comprehensive discussion on this issue, see XIAO (forthcoming c).
 - (26) See ŌTA 2015, pp.184-185.
 - (27) It is noteworthy that there is no Sanskrit equivalent to the Chinese character *bei* 輩 “grade”. That is to say, this classification of the levels of rebirth based on the degree of adherence to the ascetic precepts was probably deliberately created by the Chinese translator in order to highlight the importance of adhering to the precepts for the sake of rebirth in the land of Amitābha (see XIAO forthcoming a). This structure influenced the nine-grade system of rebirth found in the *Guan wuliangshou jing* (T.12, No.365, hereafter the *Guan-jing*). Regarding the relationship between the *Guan-jing* and the *Da amituo jing* (see XIAO forthcoming b).
 - (28) It reads : 【大阿】諸欲往生阿彌陀佛國者, 當精進持經戒, 奉行如是上法者, 則得往生阿彌陀佛國, 可得為眾所尊敬。是為上第一輩(T.12, p.302 p.310 a12-14). Those who desire to be reborn in the land of Amitābha should be diligent and abide by the Buddhist precepts. Those who pursue the Buddhist Dharma as listed above will be able to be reborn in land of Amitābha, and then they will be admired by people. This is the premier grade.
 - (29) Regarding why Amitābha faith is labeled as *jingtu* 淨土 “Pure Land”, see XIAO 2010, and 2012b.
 - (30) HIRAKAWA undertook a detailed discussion on this issue based on its connection with “stupa veneration” as found in early Mahāyāna Chinese translations, such as the *Banzhou sanmei jing* 般舟三昧經, attributed to *Zhilou-jiachen* 支婁迦讖 “Lokakṣema” (See HIRAKAWA 1990, pp.117-136).
 - (31) For a comparative table regarding the passage about the middle grade of aspirants in different versions, see ŌTA 2005, pp.186-189.

- (32) Regarding some of the special terms found in the *Da amituo jing* and their characteristics, see Xiao 2016a, pp.64-65 ; and 2016b, pp.27-28.
- (33) The Sixth Vow : When I attain Buddhahood, (I) if good men and good women among the people of the immeasurable Buddha-lands of the eight quarters, as well as above and below, who desire to be reborn in my Land, and do (the following) good deeds as much as possible because of my (virtue) : (II-1) cultivate almsgiving and donations, (II-2) worship stupas by circumambulating them and burning incense, (II-3) worship Buddhas by spreading flowers and lighting candles, (II-4) hang silk fabrics to adorn Buddhist temples, (II-5) offer food to the sangha, (II-6) build stupas and temples ; and (III) discard lust, attachment and keep ascetic precepts day and night, they will all be reborn in my Land as bodhisattvas. If I cannot fulfill this vow, may I not attain Buddhahood.
- (34) Regarding the term 作善, see the note 23 of this paper.
- (35) It is noteworthy that there are seventeen characters (齋戒清淨, 一心念我晝夜一日不斷絕皆令) next to the words 斷愛欲 which have been deleted in the Taishō canon. These 17 characters have neither a parallel in the Sanskrit version, nor a parallel in any other version. These seventeen characters should have been in existence at the time when the *Da amituo jing* was translated into Chinese because the concept of *zaijie* 齋戒 also appears in the fulfillment of the 6th vow, the paragraphs on the middle grade of aspirants, which reads : “其中輩者……不當瞋怒, 齋戒清淨, 慈心精進, 斷愛欲念。欲往生阿彌陀佛國, 一日一夜不斷絕者……”(T.12, p.292a5-16).
- (36) SASAKI observed the usage of the Chinese phrase 不信, and indicated that the texts containing this phrase are probably creations of the translator. Although I agree with the conclusion of Sasaki in general, I would like to point out that the words 不信 should not be dealt in special terms, but rather in the light of the negative syntax repeatedly used in the *Da amituo jing*. It is hard to determine by merely depending on the words 不信, whether these texts were derived from the original Indian text of the *Da amituo jing*. Obviously, the translator purposely highlights “faith” through a negative syntax. For a preliminary study on *huasheng* 化生 “rebirth by transformation on a lotus flower,” see XIAO 2016c. It is one of the characteristics that some important elements have been highlighted by negative syntaxes or antonyms in the *Da amituo jing*. For example, 智慧 wisdom ⇌ 愚癡 ignorance. The relationship between faith and rebirth in the land of Amitābha deserves to be discussed more in a separate paper.
- (37) The Fifth Vow : When I attain Buddhahood, if people and beings that flit and wriggle in the immeasurable Buddha-lands of the eight quarters, as well as above and below, who committed evils in their previous lives, hear my name and aspire to be reborn in my land, instantly correct their actions and confess their mistakes, cultivate the Buddha-dharma and good merit, and, adhere to the Buddhist precepts, constantly aspire to be reborn in my land, they will not be reborn into the realm of hell, birds and beasts, but will instantly be reborn in my land in accordance with their aspiration when they die. If I do not fulfill this vow, may I not attain Buddhahood.
- (38) It reads : 十九、我作佛時, 他方佛國人民前世為惡, 聞我名字及正為道欲來生我國, 壽終皆令不復更三惡道, 則生我國在心所願 ; 不爾者, 我不作佛。(T.12, No.281c 6-9). The 19th vow : When I attain Buddhahood, if people in other Buddha-lands who committed evils in their previous lives hear my name, they correct their mistakes and aspire to be reborn in my land, they should not fall again into the three evil realms after death, and be reborn in my land in accordance with their aspiration. If I do not fulfill this vow, may I not attain Buddhahood.
- (39) For a study on the formation of the *Guan-jing* based on its relationship to the *Da amituo jing* is ongoing, see XIAO (forthcoming b).
- (40) It reads : 佛言 : “其三輩者……當斷愛欲無所貪慕, 得經疾慈心精進, 不當瞋怒, 齋戒清淨。如是法者。當念欲往生阿彌陀佛國, 晝夜十日不斷絕者。壽終終即往生阿彌陀佛國, 可得尊敬, 智慧勇猛。” (T12, p.310 c 10-16).
- (41) They are : (1) Do not kill ; (2) Do not steal ; (3) Do not commit adultery ; (4) Do not deceive ; (5) Do not drink ; (6) Do not be duplicitous ; (7) Do not slander ; (8) Do not tell a lie ; (9) Do not be jealous ; (10) Do not be covetous ; (11) Do not be stingy ; (12) Do not be angry ; (13) Do not be ignorant ; (14) Do not have a covet-

ous mind ; (15) Do not show remorse along the way ; (16) Do not doubt ; (17) Obey one's elders ; (18) Be sincere and faithful ; (19) Believe the Buddha's teaching ; (20) Believe deeply that you will obtain happiness after death if you practice the virtuous acts. Also cf. YAMADA (RYUKOKU UNIVERSITY TRANSLATION CENTER) 1984, p.124-125.

- (42) For a preliminary study on the formation of the *Guan-jing* based on relationship to the *Da amituo jing*, see XIAO (forthcoming b).

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